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ABSTRACT

Research into the characteristics of at-risk juveniles that contribute to violence and the patterns of behavior and neighborhood characteristics and patterns that are associated with youth violence or victimization are reviewed. The results of the studies reviewed cannot be generalized to the total population of juveniles, but the findings of these studies appear to be consistent with past research. Overall, juvenile violence is committed primarily by males and often occurs intra-racially among minority groups. The majority of juvenile offenders are 16- and 17-year-olds. Many violent offenders live in disruptive and disorganized families and communities, although the majority of youth in such environments are not involved in serious delinquency. Some recommendations are given for the prevention and control of juvenile violence. These include suggestions for dealing with gangs, guns, and high-risk juveniles. (Contains 36 references.) (SLD)

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SCHOOL INTERVENTION REPORT™

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Characteristics and Patterns of At-Risk Juveniles and Factors That Contribute to Violence Committed By or Against Juveniles*

The risk that an adolescent will become involved in violent offending and/or be a victim of violence varies based on a variety of factors, including individual characteristics, family characteristics, peer and school influences, neighborhood environment, and daily activities. Although there is no formula for determining exactly who will become violent (or a victim of violence), it is clear that some individuals are at greater risk than others. This section identifies those factors that are associated with an individual's increased risk for involvement in juvenile violence. For purposes of this report, a juvenile is defined as an individual less than 18 years of age.

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Individual Factors

Individual factors refers to the broad range of individual characteristics that may be related to behavioral patterns in a variety of ways. These factors include demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, and age, and physiological and psychological characteristics. The focus of this section is

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on demographic predictors of violent behavior.

Juveniles At Risk of Becoming Violent

In general, the most powerful demographic predictors of individual violent criminality are gender and age. Boys in late adolescence and young men are much more likely to be serious high-rate offenders than girls or older men (Chaiken 1998a). Further, studies using official record data have consistently found greater involvement of African-Americans in violent offending than of Caucasians (LaFree 1995). Overall, the research findings from the projects included in this report confirm these patterns.

Gender. Violent offenses are overwhelmingly committed by males. In the D.C. study of juvenile violence, of the 2,686 juveniles charged with the four most serious person offenses (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault), 82 percent were males. The S.C. homicide study found that 88 percent of the juveniles who committed homicide between 1992 and 1994 were male. Not surprisingly, males were also more likely to display early signs of aggressive behavior, specifically in the form of bullying. The S.C. bullying study reveals that males were significantly more likely than females to report bullying their peers and twice as likely as females to engage in physical actions to bully others.

The Causes and Correlates research findings indicate that, in general, a greater percentage of males are involved in serious violence than females (Tatem-Kelley et al. 1997). This is consistent with past research findings indicating that violence is more prevalent in males. However, females reported considerable involvement in serious violence. In the Denver sample, the prevalence of serious violence among females ages 13 to 15 was more than half that of males the same age. The difference was even less in the Rochester sample. In fact, at age 13, 18 percent of females reported the commission of serious violence compared with 16 percent of males. Thus, females appeared to be increasingly involved in violent behavior.

Age. Results from the violence studies indicate that many juveniles involved in violent behavior begin this behavior by age 15. In the D.C. juvenile violence study, of the 2,686 juveniles charged with the 4 most serious person offenses,* almost 40 percent were 15 or younger. In the S.C. homicide study, the mean age at the instant offense of youth in the homicide group was 15.8. Youth in the assault-and-battery group averaged 15.6 years and youth in the other serious offenses group averaged 15.1 years.

Past research has generally indicated that rates of violence among males tend to peak at ages 15 to 17 and then decline (Tatem-Kelley et al. 1997). The Causes and Correlates research has not documented a decline in males' self-reported involvement in serious violence in late adolescence. However, females did show an expected age curve with prevalence rates peaking in mid-adolescence and declining thereafter.

Race. Both the D.C. juvenile violence study and the S.C. homicide study found that African-Americans were disproportionately arrested for violent offenses. African-Americans account for approximately 65 percent of the total population in the District of Columbia, yet the D.C. juvenile violence study found that, of the 2,686 juveniles charged with the four most serious person offenses, 98 percent were African-American. Whereas the total population in the state of South Carolina is approximately 30

*Includes homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault

percent African-American, the S.C. homicide study found that 82 percent of the juvenile homicide offenders referred to the state solicitor were African-American, 16 percent were Caucasian, and two percent were other races. African-Americans were somewhat over-represented in the homicide and assault and battery groups compared with the other serious offender group.

In the Causes and Correlates study, prevalence rates were examined by age and ethnicity. In Denver and Rochester, three ethnic groups were included: Caucasians, African-Americans, and Hispanics. Because there were virtually no Hispanics in the Pittsburgh sample, only Caucasians and African-Americans were studied in that sample. With only one exception (18-year-olds in Rochester), prevalence rates were higher among minority groups than among Caucasians at each age and site.

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Juveniles At Risk of Becoming Victims of Homicide/Violence

Most commonly, studies have revealed that juvenile homicide victims are of the same race and gender as their perpetrators and that the most likely victims of juvenile homicide are acquaintances, followed by strangers, and then family members (Melton et al. 1998). The most recent national data indicate that in 1995, 54 percent of victims were acquaintances, 36 percent were strangers, and 10 percent were family members (Sickmund et al. 1997).

In terms of gender, the D.C. juvenile violence study found that between 1993 and 1995, 88 percent of juvenile homicide victims were male. The results further show that in 1993, 57 percent of juvenile assault victims were male and in 1994, 59 percent were male. Regarding the age of juvenile victims, between 1993 and 1995, 10 percent of juvenile homicide victims in D.C. were 11 years of age or younger. Nearly 69 percent were 16- or 17-year-olds.

The D.C. juvenile violence study found that the majority of juvenile victims of violence are African-American. All but one of the juvenile homicide victims between 1993 and 1995 were African-American. The D.C. juvenile violence study also found that during 1993, 95 percent of youth victims of all non-fatal violent crimes were African-American — 1,476 as compared with 79 Caucasian youth. In 1994, 94 percent were African-American.

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Demographic Characteristics of Participants in Homicide Incidents Invoking Juveniles

Unlike the D.C. juvenile violence and S.C. homicide studies, which focused on juvenile offenders and juvenile victims as exclusive categories, the Los Angeles homicide study looked at victims and offenders of homicide incidents involving juveniles as one group. Thus, the Los Angeles sample includes both juveniles and adults. Of the 311 homicide incidents, 30 percent involved a juvenile victim but only adult suspects, 46 percent involved only adult victims but a juvenile suspect, and 24 percent involved juveniles as both victims and suspects. This finding is interesting because it indicates that adults are frequently involved in violence by and against juveniles. Slightly less than one-quarter (24 percent) of the homicide incidents involving juveniles were "kids against kids."

The Los Angeles homicide study found that of the 1,248 individuals designated by law enforcement as victims or suspects in 311 homicide incidents involving juveniles, 92 percent were males and 96 percent were minority (58 percent Hispanic and 28 percent African-American).

Thus, in terms of gender and race, the Los Angeles homicide study echoes results from the other studies showing substantial involvement of minority males in juvenile violence. The mean age of all victims was approximately 23 years and the mean age for offenders was approximately 18.5; median ages for victims and offenders were 17 and 18, respectively.

Additional Individual Factors

A number of additional individual-level factors behavior the demographic characteristics of gender, race, and age are linked with subsequent violent activity (Hawkins et al. 1998). These factors include hyperactivity and risk-taking behavior, aggressiveness, early initiation of violence (by age 12-13), and involvement in other forms of antisocial behavior. These factors are beyond the scope of most of the present studies.* However, some did look at criminal history factors.

Criminal History Factors

Research on the careers of serious and violent offenders suggests that early onset of delinquency and violent behavior predicts more serious and chronic violence among youth (Hawkins et al. 1998; Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber 1995). The Causes and Correlates projects in Denver, Pittsburgh, and Rochester examined the ages of onset of serious delinquency** for juvenile offenders in urban areas and found that most males who eventually became persistent serious offenders had committed their first serious nonviolent offense by age 14 — 85 percent in Pittsburgh, approximately 65 percent in both Denver and Rochester (Stouthamer-Loeber et al. 1997). The average age of first referral in the S.C. homicide study was 14 years for youth in the homicide group, 14.2 years for youth in the assault and battery group, and 14.1 years for youth in the other serious assault group.

*The Causes and Correlates studies have examined these factors in great detail. Information on these results can be found in the book *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions* (Loeber and Farrington, eds., 1998).

**Includes aggravated assault, robbery, rape, gang fights, burglary, theft over $50, arson, auto theft, fencing, forgery, and fraud.

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Relatively few studies have examined patterns of delinquent and criminal activity among juvenile homicide offenders in particular; most focus on violent offenders as a whole. The S.C. homicide study compared juvenile homicide offenders with other serious juvenile offenders on the offense type of first referral to the state solicitor. For youth in the homicide group, their first referral most typically was for an offense against persons (33 percent). In every instance, this offense against persons was the target homicide offense. The next most frequent type of referral was an offense against the public order (31 percent) (e.g., driving under the influence), followed by property offenses (17 percent), other offenses (11 percent) (e.g., blackmail or extortion, driving with a suspended license), and status offenses (8 percent).

In comparison with the homicide group, the most frequent first referral for youth in the assault-and-battery group was also for an offense against persons (40 percent, all of which were the target offense of assault and battery with intent to kill), followed by property offenses (22 percent), other offenses (17 percent), public order offenses (15 percent), and status offenses (7 percent). The other serious offense group differed, however, in that the most frequent first referral was for a property offense (32 percent), followed by offenses against persons (28 percent), public order offenses (27 percent), other offenses (8 percent), and status offenses (5 percent). For the majority of the group, their first referral was for the target offense.

These findings suggest that juveniles who are referred for homicide and those who are referred for assault and battery with intent to kill are similar in that both groups lack official juvenile justice records that could be used to identify them before they are involved in fatal or near-fatal offending. However, this does not eliminate the possibility that they display other problem behaviors that could be detected in other systems (e.g., schools, social services).

Neighborhood Factors

In addition to individual factors, contextual factors contribute to an adolescent's risk of violence. Such contextual factors include family, school, peers, and community and neighborhood factors (Hawkins et al. 1998). Several studies cited in this report examined neighborhood factors associated with juvenile violence.

The D.C. juvenile violence study found that one census tract, the Douglas neighborhood of Southeast D.C., emerged as a high-risk zone for the three non-fatal violent crimes. It was the highest risk tract for rape and assault of juveniles in 1993 and 1994 and for juvenile robbery victimizations in 1993. The tract has a poverty rate of 41 percent, compared with 17 percent for the District as a whole. In addition, 86 percent of households were single-parent (female-headed) households.

The S.C. study of community social disorganization and crime examined rates of juvenile violence in 264 rural counties (in four states) with total populations ranging from 560 to 98,000. The juvenile populations included in the analyses ranged from 50 to 11,000. The study found that juvenile violence was consistently associated with rates of family disruption, ethnic heterogeneity, and poverty. Juvenile arrest rates for violent crimes displayed a curvilinear relationship to population size such that per capita arrest rates went up with increases in juvenile population in the range from 50 to 4,000. Beyond this level, increasing juvenile population had little impact on arrest rates for violent offenses other than robbery.

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The Milwaukee homicide study examined the spatial distribution of homicide victimization, both adult and juvenile, in census tracts of Milwaukee. The researchers found that the majority of victimizations from 1989 to 1993 were concentrated in the most deprived census tracts of the city, labeled "dangerous neighborhoods." Homicides of juveniles ages 13 to 17 were even more concentrated. Eighty-five percent of the 34 juvenile victimizations during this time period occurred in 19 "dangerous neighborhoods," with more than half taking place in just four neighborhoods. Three of these neighborhoods were among the most disadvantaged in the city's African-American community, as measured by neighborhood stress levels and economic opportunity scores.

Additional analyses using life-history information obtained on the juveniles interviewed in the Milwaukee homicide study revealed that all 11 of the juvenile gang-related offenders resided in extreme poverty areas, 10 lived in single-parent households, and six experienced serious household violence. Overall, out of 29 juvenile homicide offenders (including four groups — gang-related, drug-related, robbery-related, and other) interviewed, 90 percent lived in a single-parent household and 45 percent reported serious incidents of household violence. These findings indicate the extent to which juvenile homicide offenders live in disadvantaged homes and neighborhoods.

Prevalence of Violence Among Youth in High-Risk Neighborhoods

Twenty years of research repeatedly has shown that in any city or neighborhood a small percentage of offenders are responsible for committing a large proportion of the crime that occurs there (Chaiken 1998b). Two violence studies, the D.C. survey and the Los Angeles survey, specifically explored the prevalence of violence among adolescent males in high-risk neighborhoods.

The data collected in the D.C. survey support prior research findings that a small group of offenders are responsible for a large percentage of violent crime. Among all boys interviewed, 7 percent were responsible for committing 36 percent of all the reported delinquent acts. This small number of youth committed close to one-fourth (21 percent) of all juvenile assaults, close to half (44 percent) of all drug deals, and close to half (44 percent) of all property crimes committed by the entire group of boys in the 6 months prior to this study.*

A substantial number of studies also demonstrate that few youth make it through adolescence without doing something that could get them into trouble, but most are not seriously involved in crime. Relatively few of the boys (22 percent) interviewed in these D.C. neighborhoods failed to self-report any acts that would be considered criminal. But even these "good kids," in the six months before the study, committed, on average, more than one act that could be considered a juvenile offense, such as running away or underage drinking.

The Los Angeles survey found that 30 percent of the boys interviewed from high-risk neighborhoods reported committing at

*Analysis of the DC survey data identified six varieties of criminal behavior among the adolescents interviewed: (1) "good kids" who committed no criminal acts (22 percent), (2) "fighters" who committed only assaults (19 percent), (3) drug dealers who sold drugs and committed occasional assaults (5 percent), (4) property offenders who do not commit robbery or drug dealing (32 percent), (5) property/dealers who commit property offenses and drug dealing but not robbery (16 percent), and (6) robbery offenders, the 7 percent of boys responsible for committing 36 percent of all the reported delinquent acts.

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least one violent offense in the six months prior to the interview. The most common offenses were throwing bottles or rocks at people (15 percent), being in a gang fight (9 percent), and hitting someone with the intent to hurt them (13 percent). With regard to victimization, the Los Angeles survey found that 34 percent reported at least one violent victimization within the six months prior to the interview. The most common types of victimization were having objects thrown at them (21 percent) and being hit (13 percent). Eight percent of the youth reported being attacked with a weapon. As the Los Angeles survey shows, some youth were both offenders and victims (19 percent). Only 11 percent were offenders but not victims and 15 percent were victims but not offenders. The majority (55 percent) were neither victims nor offenders.

Summary

Although the results of these studies cannot be generalized to the total population of juveniles, these individual snapshots appear to be consistent with findings from past research. Overall, juvenile violence is committed primarily by males and often occurs intra-racially among minority males. While some younger adolescents do commit violent offenses, the majority of juvenile offenders and victims are 16- and 17-year-olds. An examination of neighborhood factors indicates that many violent juvenile offenders live in disruptive and disorganized families and communities. However, as the surveys with the children living in high-risk neighborhoods show, the majority of youth who live in such environments are not involved in serious delinquency.

Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Juvenile Violence

As a whole, the juvenile violence studies recommended that interventions to prevent and control juvenile violence should consider four problems/issues: gangs, guns, high-risk juveniles, and locations and times of highest risk for juvenile violence. It is important to consider that the recommendations from this group of studies focus on issues that arose from their particular findings. Thus, this section is not intended to present a comprehensive set of recommendations for the prevention and control of juvenile violence in all communities.

Gangs

The findings of the violence studies suggest the importance of establishing effective intervention programs for gang-involved youth. An extensive body of literature on the offending profiles of gang members shows that gang members are more frequently involved in violence than similarly situated non-gang youth (Thornberry 1998). Gang members are also more violent during periods of gang membership than prior to joining or after leaving gangs (Thornberry et al. 1993). Clearly, successful efforts to reduce gang membership will also produce reductions in juvenile violence. Although many programs have difficulty meeting the challenge posed by youth street gangs, there are some promising strategies. These strategies tend to fall into at least one of three categories: prevention, intervention, and suppression.

The most promising and cost-effective anti-gang strategy is preventing youth from

joining gangs in the first place (Howell 1998). The example of this type of program is the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, a school-based gang-prevention curriculum implemented by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Fire Arms that has shown positive preliminary results. Students who completed the G.R.E.A.T. program reported lower levels of gang affiliation and self-reported delinquency (Esbensen and Osgood 1997).

On a community level, there are a number of rational youth organizations engaged in gang outreach that provide neutral territory for productive after school activities, thus providing youth with alternatives to gang involvement (Chaiken 1998a). The Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach program is one example. This program serves as a referral network to link local clubs with courts, police departments, schools, social service agencies, and other organizations. The goal of the network is to recruit youth who are at risk for gang involvement to participate in club programs without the attachment of stigma. Preliminary findings have been encouraging. Other youth organizations serving youth who are at risk for gang involvement include the Girls Incorporated Centers, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of the United States of America, and Boy Scouts of America (Chaiken, 1998a).

Although prevention may be the most cost-effective anti-gang strategy, programs that target youth who are already involved in gang activity are critical. Some youth organizations already engaged in gang prevention activities also reach out to current gang members. However, gang suppression efforts, as opposed to prevention and intervention, tend to be the predominant strategy used by many jurisdictions to reduce gang activity. For example, the Tri-Resource Gang Enforcement Team Agency (TARGET) in California is a comprehensive strategy combining gang interdiction, apprehension, and prosecution (Capizzi, Cook, and Schumacher 1995). A Gang Incident Tracking System (GITS) is used to track gang members. Information from GITS is used by the TARGET program to select appropriate gang members and gangs for intervention. While these intervention and suppression efforts are generally considered promising, there is a need for more evaluation of these strategies.

There is general recognition among gang experts that the most effective strategies to deter gang involvement are likely to be comprehensive, multi-pronged approaches that incorporate prevention, intervention, and suppression activities, while encouraging collaboration among various community agencies. The Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Program is an OJJDP demonstration initiative that is currently being implemented in five jurisdictions (Thornberry and Burch, 1997). This is a multi-year effort to implement and test a comprehensive model developed by Dr. Irving Spergel at the University of Chicago. The strategies in this model consist of a combination of community mobilization, social intervention and outreach, provision of social and economic opportunities for youth, suppression, and organizational change and development. The demonstrations are currently being evaluated.

Findings from the Los Angeles homicide study emphasize the high rate of involvement of gang members in adolescent homicides. The dynamics of gang homicides suggest that truce-making activities among rival gangs should be assessed (Maxson 1998). Truce-making efforts have been initiated in the Los Angeles area and elsewhere but have never been adequately evaluated. Anecdotal evidence suggests that truces are difficult to maintain. Nevertheless, the spo-

radic nature of gang violence (Klein 1995) and the contagious nature of the threat of rival gangs (Decker and Van Winkle 1996) suggest that efforts to make peace and reduce the perception of threat by rival gangs should be considered. Truce-making might be one creative approach to reducing the lethality of gang membership.

The Los Angeles homicide study also found that firearms played a greater role in gang-related homicides than in nongang-related homicides involving juveniles. Thus, programs and policies attempting to reduce adolescent homicides in Los Angeles clearly must target the accessibility and use of firearms by gang members. Firearms reduction strategies should take into account gang dynamics and the features of gang homicides. For example, particular attention should be accorded to the legal and extra-legal suppliers of firearms to gang members. Attempts to control the availability of illegal firearms should be informed by the demand characteristics of gang consumers. Other studies have indicated that gang members most often purchase firearms for protection and "on the street" rather than from licensed firearms dealers (Lizotte et al. 1997; Decker and Van Winkle 1996; Sheley and Wright 1995). The Boston Gun Project, which will be discussed in the next section, is an example of a gun violence reduction program that focuses on gangs in its intervention activities.

Guns

Data from the violence studies indicate that guns play a major role in juvenile violence. The findings also show that adolescents own guns for a variety of reasons, including sport, protection, and intimidation of others. Although society should certainly be concerned about adolescents carrying firearms in certain circumstances (e.g., at school), findings from the S.C. homicide study and Lizotte and colleagues' (1994) Rochester analysis suggest that not all adolescent gun owners are equally dangerous. Thus, violence prevention, whether it be school based or community based, should focus on high-risk gun owners.

Maxson (1998) suggests that the Boston Gun Project (Kennedy et al. 1997) is a well-publicized illustration of an intervention that narrowly focuses on gang firearm possession and use. Operation Ceasefire is one of the interventions included in the Boston Gun Project. This program engages multiple law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in targeted deterrence activities. Gang members are notified that carrying firearms will precipitate a swift and severe response (e.g., Federal prosecution and disruption of drug activities). Homicides of young men age 24 and younger fell by two-thirds in Boston after the Ceasefire strategy was put in place in 1996 (Kennedy 1998).

The LINC report points out that recent research shows two promising measures for reducing the number of adolescent males who carry guns and, therefore, reducing the number of fatalities that result from fights between youth with guns: (1) close down the main sources of guns reaching youth, and (2) give youth face-saving reasons not to carry guns. At this point in time, it is not known how best to accomplish those two objectives. Thus, there is a need for impact evaluations of promising programs for closing down sources supplying youth with guns and for further experiments on techniques for discouraging youth from carrying guns.

High-Risk Juveniles

The LINC report recommends identifying the 7 percent of neighborhood youth

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who are the most serious delinquents. Results from interviews of youth in three of the highest crime areas of the District show that about 7 percent are serious delinquents in need of immediate attention. These youth need to be told what forms of violent behavior (e.g., using a gun, aggravated assault, etc.) will result in massive crackdowns on them, their crews, and friends who are accessories. If they commit violent acts, they must be sanctioned immediately by those with authority to do so. If youth are to be deterred by such crackdowns and sanctions, they must be aware of the effort and believe that the consequences will actually take place. The process of handling juveniles in the courts and in corrections must be streamlined so youth realize that unlawful behavior results in rapid response. Teachers, police, and others who are mandated to control the youths' behavior may know who these youth are. A concerted justice system response working closely with the community can effectively control their worst behavior.

Locations and Times Associated With Highest Risk of Juvenile Violent Offending

. As the results from the juvenile violence studies indicate, there are certain situational conditions that appear to be associated with an increase in juvenile violent offending. Thus, it is important for interventions to target the locations and times associated with the highest risk of juvenile violent offending.

Where

Schools. The Washington, D.C., studies suggest that since youth violence in the District tends to cluster near schools, especially high schools and middle schools, those areas may be promising targets for proactive police problem-solving, truancy prevention, and other activities to reduce youth violence.

One promising approach for reducing violence in the schools is bullying prevention. Bullying has been associated with a variety of adverse effects on adolescents, including antisocial behavior. The first intervention to reduce bullying among school children was developed by Olweus (1993) and launched in Norway in the early 1980's. This program involves interventions at multiple levels (e.g., school-wide, classroom, and individual) designed to establish norms within the school environment that support prosocial and inclusive behavior among children and that discourage bullying and other antisocial behavior. Olweus (1993, 1991) observed a reduction in bullying, victimization, and antisocial behavior as a result of a bullying prevention program being implemented in Norwegian schools. Specifically, there were strong reductions in self-reports of vandalism, fighting, theft, alcohol use, and truancy.

Until recently, there have been few attempts to establish anti-bullying initiatives in U.S. schools. The S.C. Bullying Prevention study evaluated a bullying prevention program implemented in S.C. middle schools, a program based largely on the model developed by Olweus. Preliminary findings indicate that the program did reduce self-reported delinquency after one year. However, more research is needed on the long-term impact of this type of program.

Neighborhoods. The D.C. juvenile violence study found that certain neighborhoods are at greater risk for juvenile violence than surrounding areas and that the high-risk neighborhoods remained relatively stable over two consecutive years: 1993 and

1994. Current data should be analyzed to identify current "hot spots" for youth violence, existing programs in those neighborhoods should be inventoried, and new programs should be strategically placed to fill the gaps.

The year-to-year stability in juvenile violence rates strongly suggests that the high-crime areas are geographically stable enough for new programs to become established and attract participants before youth violence would move elsewhere naturally — that new program locations will not be "obsolete on arrival." Other findings of this study suggest that, at least in the most troubled District areas, programs should address the needs of entire neighborhoods, rather than specific conditions at pinpointed addresses or intersections.

The Milwaukee homicide study found that neighborhoods experiencing high homicide rates are among the most desolate in the city of Milwaukee. As in the D.C. juvenile violence study, the Milwaukee homicide study found that elevated risk at the neighborhood level exhibited a high degree of stability during the 1989-93 time period. Thus, the Milwaukee findings suggest that there is a need for neighborhood-level intervention and prevention strategies. However, very few neighborhood-level interventions have been implemented and even fewer have been evaluated. Therefore, there is a need for further development in this area.

When

The Washington, D.C., studies recommend intervening with youth at times when youth violence most likely will occur. Interventions such as youth curfews and midnight basketball presuppose that youth violence occurs at generally the same times as adult violence: in the evenings, especially on weekends. Instead, prevention activities should be implemented at three generally overlooked times of day, when the risk of youth violence is elevated: after school, at school lunch periods, and in the morning before school.

Late summer evenings are also peak periods for youth violence. This pattern emerges from an analysis by The Urban Institute on youth violence in 1993 and 1994, especially when school months and summer months are considered separately. The hours between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. are highest for juvenile victimizations during the school months, but not during the summer months.

In summer 1995, the District passed a curfew law aimed at reducing juvenile offending and victimization between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. By October 1996, a Federal judge overturned the law because the city council had not provided adequate data supporting the notion that a large number of crimes are committed during that period. In fact, during the hours associated with the curfew, youth are highly vulnerable in the summer, though less so during the school year. A recent LINC report, entitled *Kids, COPS, and Communities,* suggests that the best role police can play in the school and after-school setting is to help contribute to the positive development of youth by participating in and supporting youth development programs run by professionals in the schools and youth organizations.

The Los Angeles homicide study notes that other incident characteristics provide some direction for program development. Programs should operate throughout the year with additional efforts expended in the high-volume months of May and July. The nighttime hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. are the most common period for adolescent homicide in Los Angeles, but elevated risk was detected earlier in the evening, beginning at 7 p.m. Although juvenile curfew laws may reduce some juvenile violence, the

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effects would be limited since so much violence occurs in the afternoon and early evenings, time periods that would not be covered in the curfew. One advisory board member for the Los Angeles homicide study suggested that probation conditions to stay at home after dark should be enforced, perhaps through the use of electronic monitoring techniques. Programs that productively occupy adolescents in the mid-evening hours might also be more effective for homicide reduction than after-school programs in Los Angeles. The high volume of street settings suggests that efforts to otherwise occupy youth might also be productive by keeping them off the streets. School and park facilities are convenient locations for adult-supervised activities.

Conclusion

The findings from these studies provide additional evidence that violence is taking an alarming toll on minority communities, particularly urban African-American and Hispanic communities. Recent research indicates that the disproportionate level of violence many urban areas are experiencing stems from a combination of macro-level risk factors (such as poverty and joblessness) and individual-level risk factors, particularly family disruption (Hawkins et al. 1998). Consequently, there is a need for concentrated prevention efforts in those inner-city neighborhoods that experience the highest levels of juvenile violence. In addition to some of the programs and strategies suggested in this report, it is important to consider strategies that work with families and impact neighborhood disorder whenever possible.

A recent OJJDP Bulletin Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders (1998), identifies a number of early intervention programs that have been found to be effective in mediating risk associated with serious and violent juvenile offenders. These programs address risk factors in several domains — child, parent, school, and community. The following is a list of examples of effective intervention (for further details on effective programs, see *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions* Loeber and Farrington, eds. 1998):

- Child – Home visitation of pregnant teenagers, social competence, training, peer mediation and conflict resolution, and medical treatment for neurological disorders and mental illness.
- Parent – Parent-management training, functional family therapy, and family preservation.
- School – Early intellectual enrichment and school organization interventions.
- Community – Comprehensive community mobilization, situational crime prevention, intensive police patrolling, legal and policy changes restricting availability and use of guns, drugs, and alcohol and mandatory-sentencing laws for crimes involving firearms.

It is important to remember that it will take longer to see an impact from child, parent, and school interventions than from community interventions. The *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders* (1998) Bulletin suggests that the most successful early intervention programs involve simultaneous interventions in multiple domains — homes, school, and community. However, there is a continuing need for further research to determine the effectiveness of these programs on a widespread basis and the combination of programs that work best.

An additional finding worth noting is that much juvenile violence occurs when there is a group of unsupervised teenagers. Although adolescents cannot and should not be supervised at all times, it is possible to increase the level of supervision in some circumstances, particularly in and around schools. As the D.C. survey showed, a considerable amount of juvenile violence takes place in or near schools. Schools that experience high levels of violence should look into ways that they can increase the level of structure within the school and maintain a higher degree of adult supervision. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice recently released a joint report, entitled, *Early Warning, Time Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* (1998), which identifies a number of effective violence prevention and intervention activities that schools can implement to increase the level of safety on and around school premises. This guide is a good initial resource for schools looking for ways to reduce juvenile violence.

The overriding message from these studies is that there is a need for a balanced and comprehensive approach to address the problem of juvenile violence. Communities must work with the juvenile justice system to prevent the development of violent behavior and to intervene with violent youth in effective ways. Using precisely this concept, OJJDP's *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (1995) provides a framework for strategic responses at the community, city, state, and national levels, designed to target the problem of juvenile violence. In 1996, the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention released *Combating Violence and Delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan (Action Plan),* an eight-point statement of objectives and strategies designed to strengthen state and local initiatives to address and reduce the impact of juvenile violence and delinquency. The *Action Plan* provides model program examples that communities can draw from to address several of the problem areas identified by the Juvenile Violence Research Studies, including reducing youth involvement with guns and gangs and providing more neighborhood-based programs for children and youth.

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